

# CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

APRIL 25, 2022

## Current Conditions

- January, February and March 2022 were the driest on record dating back over 100 years, with just six inches of precipitation observed across the Sierra Nevada.
- Though storms briefly returned to Northern California last week, the small amounts of rain and snowfall did not make a significant dent in the water deficit the state faces.
- Statewide precipitation for the water year to date is 75 percent of average. Sierra-Cascades snowpack for the water year to date is 35 percent of average, up from 31 percent last week. Statewide reservoir storage is 70 percent of average for this time of year.
- All of California's 58 counties are under a drought emergency proclamation. Californians are being asked to reduce their water use by 15 percent over 2020 levels to protect water reserves and help maintain critical flows for fish and wildlife wherever possible.
- As of April 24, the state's voluntary household dry well reporting system received reports of 32 dry wells in the past 30 days. Ten dry wells were reported in Fresno County alone. Dry wells were also reported in Butte, Kings, Lake, Madera, Plumas, San Joaquin, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Sonoma, Tehama and Tulare counties.

The California Drought Update is a weekly roundup of conditions, state actions and upcoming developments. It is produced by an interagency team that includes the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Water Resources Control Board and the Department of Public Health. For the latest on drought, please visit [www.drought.ca.gov](http://www.drought.ca.gov). For tips and resources for conserving water, please visit [www.saveourwater.com](http://www.saveourwater.com).

## Recent Events and State Actions

**State agencies hold workshop for small suppliers (April 20):** DWR and the State Water Board held the first of three workshops for small water suppliers tied to the new requirements of SB 552, a 2021 law that requires drought contingency planning. The agencies seek input on the water shortage contingency plan template for suppliers with fewer than 3,000 connections and for schools.

**Governor highlights state drought response (April 19):**

Governor Gavin Newsom visited Lake Oroville to highlight efforts to advance long-term water resilience and bolster the state's drought response. The Governor toured Hyatt Powerplant and discussed how drought affects hydroelectric power generation. Video of the event can be found [here](#).



**State Water Board releases draft updates to emergency regulations to curtail water rights in the Delta watershed (April 19):**

The State Water Board's Division of Water Rights released [draft updates](#) to its emergency regulations to curtail unauthorized water diversions in the Delta watershed. The Board is tentatively planning to consider readopting the emergency regulation this summer before the current emergency regulation expires in August 2022. The Board will hold a technical [workshop](#) to discuss the proposed regulation on May 12 and public comments will be accepted until May 19.

**CEQA suspension approved to protect groundwater (April 19):** Under authority granted in the Governor's March 28 [Executive Order](#) on drought, the Secretary for Natural Resources approved a suspension of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to facilitate a change in land use on a 690-acre property that includes 442 acres of almond trees. The Westlands Water District board intends to permanently fallow the orchard to reduce groundwater pumping and help protect the California Aqueduct from subsidence damage. Drought-related CEQA exemptions are tracked [here](#).

**Bureau releases "flushing flows" into Klamath River (April 15):** The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation started releasing "flushing" flows from Iron Gate Dam on the Klamath River to clear rocks downstream of organisms that can host *C. shasta* disease, which kills young salmon. These flows, required under endangered species protection rules, normally target flows of 6,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) or more. Flows were curtailed to a peak of 4,000 cfs due to the low supply of available water.

**New Save Our Water content (ongoing):** The Save Our Water campaign continues to roll out new content across various multimedia platforms including social, digital and streaming platforms, out-of-home, and radio. The multilingual ads communicate the urgent need to save water and provide actionable steps Californians can take. The Save Our Water campaign is reaching Californians with helpful videos and tips for fixing leaks and reducing outdoor watering. Visit [www.saveourwater.com](http://www.saveourwater.com) for more.

**Adjustments to curtailments (ongoing):** As drought conditions persist, the State Water Board continues to monitor six critical watersheds where worsening conditions may threaten water supplies. Curtailments remain in effect in the [Delta watershed](#), two [sub-watersheds of the Delta](#) and in the [Shasta River watershed](#). Based on current conditions and available forecasts, curtailments in the [Russian River watershed](#) are temporarily suspended through the end of April and curtailments in the [Scott River watershed](#) are temporarily suspended through April 29. Water Board staff will continue to adjust curtailment orders as conditions change.

## Tribal / Local Actions

- **Tribal governments:** Tribal emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, Karuk Tribe, Resighini Rancheria, Tule River Indian Tribe, Yurok Tribe, Wiyot Tribe.
- **Local government: Local emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date:** Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Nevada, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo.

## Upcoming Decisions / Milestones

**Webinar for counties on dry wells:** DWR and the Water Board will host a webinar **April 26** with county environmental health directors to encourage county adoption of dry private residential well programs.

## Key Data Points and Resources

- Daily Hydrological & Climate Information summary:  
<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reportapp/javareports?name=DLYHYDRO>
- Statewide water conditions: [http://cdec.water.ca.gov/water\\_cond.html](http://cdec.water.ca.gov/water_cond.html)
- Daily Reservoir Storage Summary: <https://cdec.water.ca.gov/reservoir.html>
- Water Year Forecast and Monthly Distribution: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reportapp/javareports?name=B120DIST>
- Monthly water supplier reports on water production and conservation:  
[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/conservation\\_portal/conservation\\_reporting.html](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/conservation_portal/conservation_reporting.html)
- Latest groundwater conditions and information: <https://sgmatest.water.ca.gov/CalGWLIVE/>
- Information on state drought actions and assistance: <https://www.drought.ca.gov>
- Conservation tips and resources for consumers: <https://saveourwater.com/>